



**Lancaster County Comprehensive
Juvenile Services Plan
2002-2005**



**LANCASTER COUNTY THREE YEAR COMPREHENSIVE
JUVENILE SERVICE PLAN
2002- 2005**

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Project Planning Director:

Name: Kit Boesch
Address: 555 South 10th Street
Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: 402.441.7447
Fax: 402.441.6301
Email: kboesch@co.lancaster.ne.us

Fiscal Officer:

Name: David Kroeker
Address: 555 South 10th Street
Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: 402.441.7447
Fax: 402.441.6301
Email: dkroeker@co.lancaster.ne.us

County Board Chair:

Name: Bob Workman
Address: 555 South 10th Street
Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: 402.441.7447
Fax: 402.441.6301
Email: bworkman@co.lancaster.ne.us

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Lancaster County's Comprehensive Juvenile Justice Plan

Executive Summary

The well being of our children in Lancaster County is of primary importance to residents and leaders in this community. Lancaster County has an excellent reputation and history of working collaboratively and young people are clearly a priority. Over the past twenty years, every major governmental and child-serving agency has joined forces at some point to focus on juvenile issues. The Justice Council and the Juvenile Justice Review Board are excellent examples of such collaboration.

When Lancaster County began revising it's Comprehensive Juvenile Justice Plan, the first step was to invite all individuals who work with youth to come to the table and examine both the accomplishments of the Lancaster County juvenile justice system and the remaining needs of youth in the county.

The accomplishments that Lancaster County has made with regard to juvenile justice have been truly phenomenal. In 1996, when the increase in juvenile crime started to peak, the community called for alternatives and the county's leadership overwhelmingly responded. Within a span of six years, Lancaster County swore in a new juvenile judge, developed a comprehensive diversion program, and began offering a broad array of community alternatives and opportunities for youth to stay out of secure detention. As the result, petitions filed on juvenile offenses began to decline.

Lancaster County has also been dedicated to reviewing its progress and evaluating what is still needed. By regularly reviewing and updating the goals and objectives of the juvenile justice system, community leaders have been able to ensure that gaps in programming are identified and addressed. It also enabled leaders to recognize successful programs. Assessing what works and what does not is essential to continued success in the intervention and prevention of juvenile crime.

Lancaster County began identifying and updating its needs by working with agencies that are serving youth and children throughout the county. Each of the agencies stated a problem that they thought was critical to the well being of youth in Lancaster County. Those problems were consolidated and brought to a brainstorming session, where the priorities were ranked depending upon urgency. From the original list of eight problems, five were clearly identified as priorities.

Priority One: Lancaster County will move to a "primary prevention" model. Under such a model-- youth, especially youth with unsupervised time and low self-esteem, are prevented from ever getting involved in activities that bring them into the criminal justice system. Over three years, Lancaster County's goal is to reduce the number of youth entering the juvenile justice system -at each level.

Priority Two: Lancaster County will strengthen intensive community-based services that integrate treatment for youth, especially youth with co-occurring disorders. Lancaster County's goal is clearly to reduce the number of youth placed in the most restrictive settings by increasing community-based treatment opportunities.

The Community Team

The well being of the children who live in Lancaster County is of primary importance to residents and leaders in this community. Making a commitment to ensuring positive youth development will reduce the problem behaviors we see too often in our youth.

Lancaster County has an excellent reputation and history of working collaboratively on many issues, and young people are clearly a priority. Over the past twenty years, every major governmental and child-serving agency has joined forces at some point to focus on juvenile issues. The Justice Council and the Juvenile Justice Review Committee are excellent examples of such collaboration.

These collaborative efforts include representation from the Juvenile Court, the City and County Attorney, the Public Defender, Lincoln Police Department, Lancaster County Sheriff, Juvenile Probation and a host of agencies that work daily to better the lives of children in Lancaster County. Collaboration between Lancaster County and Nebraska Health and Human Services has also proven to be invaluable for children and families at-risk of becoming involved (or currently involved) in the juvenile justice system.

When Lancaster County began revising its Comprehensive Juvenile Justice Plan, in December 2001, the first step was to invite all individuals who work with youth to come to the



table. They examined both the accomplishments of the Lancaster

County juvenile justice system and the remaining needs of youth in Lancaster County. In January 2002, over one hundred individuals were invited to come together and help prioritize the needs of youth in this community. (See Appendix A.)

Representatives from surrounding towns and villages were strongly encouraged to attend, as they frequently voice concerns that differ somewhat from the concerns of representatives who live within the boundaries of Lincoln. (See Appendix B)

Individuals in the large group were asked to clarify what they believed were the most serious concerns facing youth in Lancaster County and were then asked to prioritize those concerns. All individuals were also asked about what they saw as contributing, or risk factors and to identify gaps in the system.

In addition to the large team, a Steering Committee was convened with representatives from each major-decision making point in the

juvenile justice system. The Office of Juvenile Services, within Nebraska Health and Human Services, was asked for their input along with other key stakeholders. This special team was charged with conducting a final analysis and reading of the information gathered in the large work group. (See Appendix C)

A final rough draft was placed in ten locations throughout Lincoln and Lancaster County. Any person wishing to make comment or to serve on a Strategic Planning Team was provided an opportunity to do so. (See Appendix D regarding Strategic Planning Teams.)

Community Description

Lancaster County is an active, growing community located in southeast Nebraska with a population of 250,291 residents. Lancaster County is made up of 15 incorporated towns and cities, including Lincoln, the largest city in the county and the capital city of Nebraska. Bennet, Davey, Denton, Emerald, Firth, Hallam, Hickman, Malcolm, Panama, Raymond, Roca, Sprague, and Waverly are the incorporated towns included within Lancaster County's boundaries.

| Gender & Ethnicity | Total Population of Lancaster County | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| | Number | % of total |
| Male | 125,029 | 50.0% |
| Female | 125,262 | 50.0% |
| White | 225,426 | 90.1% |
| Hispanic | N/A | N/A |
| Afro-American | 7,052 | 2.8% |
| Native American | 1,599 | 0.6% |

| Gender & Ethnicity | Total Juvenile Population of Lancaster County | |
|--------------------|---|-------------|
| | Number | % of total |
| Male | 30,001 | 51% |
| Female | 28,827 | 49% |
| White | 50,188 | 85.3% |
| Hispanic | N/A | N/A |
| Afro-American | 2,299 | 3.9% |
| Native American | 498 | 0.8% |
| Asian | 1,983 | 3.4% |
| Pacific Islander | 30 | .05% |
| Other | 1,386 | 2.4% |
| Two or more races | 2,444 | 4.1% |
| Total | 58,828 | 100% |
| Asian | 7,162 | 2.9% |
| Pacific Islander | 149 | 0.1% |
| Other | 4,225 | 1.7% |
| Two or more races | 4,678 | 1.9% |
| Total | 250,291 | 100% |

The most recent census figures show that 58,828 youth under the age of 18 reside in Lancaster County. The juvenile population of Lancaster County has steadily increased from 1990 to 2000, for a total increase of more than 8% in the juvenile population over the past 10 years. This trend is expected to continue, with a projected population of 61,133 youth under the age of 18 in Lancaster County by the year 2010.

Lancaster County as a whole experienced growth of more than 17% over the past decade, which is more than double the growth rate of the rest of the state.

As the capital city and home to numerous industries, universities, colleges and cultural forums,

Lancaster County and the city of Lincoln are considered among the nation's finest places to live and raise a family. Because of the low unemployment rate and a variety of industries, the county is a place where individuals and families can grow and prosper.

The convergence of the legislature, and a number of universities and colleges add to an increasingly diverse population. While the diversity and metropolitan elements of Lincoln broaden the horizon of the people, and especially the youth who reside here, the influence of the universities and the influx of peoples bring many challenges as well.

The university atmosphere brings with it the vibrancy of young adults, but it also includes the availability and often abundance of parties, alcohol and illegal substances. The university also brings a wonderful infusion of people and different cultures.

In addition to the influence of the universities, Lancaster County is ranked 14th nationwide as a refugee relocation site (per capita). Currently over 1,500 students are enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and over 42 different languages are spoken in our public school system. The influx of cultures is tremendously beneficial in broadening the scope of the city of Lincoln, but brings with it inevitable challenges and the occasional clash of cultures.

Because Lincoln accommodates pharmaceutical companies, and electronic industries, the county also

has a higher median income for residents of Lancaster County. Despite recent downturns, the state legislature and vital tourism industry also contribute to the healthy economy. Lancaster County's median household income is \$39,478 (based upon 1997 model-based estimate), which is almost \$4,000 higher than the median income of the entire state of Nebraska. Despite this fact, almost 12% of children that live in the capitol city live below poverty level.

Socio-economic status often has a significant effect on youth involved in the juvenile justice system. According to the 2001 annual report of youth entering Lancaster County's Juvenile Diversion Program, 72% of African American youth referred to diversion lived below poverty level – compared to only 22% of the Caucasian youth referred to diversion. Youth with challenging economic situations are involved in the juvenile justice system at a higher rate than youth from median to high economic situations.



Dedicated Leadership

The Lincoln and Lancaster County community has historically been generous towards and responsive to the needs of children and youth. Since the 1970's, Lincoln and Lancaster County have utilized a Justice Council to assist in determining priorities and services in the county's criminal and juvenile justice systems.

Lancaster County has been resilient and vigilant in the wake of rising juvenile crime. In the early 1990's when community leaders began witnessing the rise of juvenile offenses in Lancaster County, they laid the groundwork for services that would meet the growing needs of youth. By 1996, when the increase in juvenile crime started to peak, the community called for alternatives and the county's leadership overwhelmingly responded. Within a span of six years, Lancaster County swore in a new juvenile judge, developed a comprehensive pre-trial diversion program, and began offering a broad array of community alternatives. Many of these alternatives allowed youth the opportunity to stay out of secure detention by placing them in settings appropriate to their level of risk. As a result, petitions filed on juvenile offenses began to decline, as did the number of youth held at the Lancaster County Detention Center.

Lancaster County has also been dedicated to reviewing its progress and evaluating what is still needed. By regularly reviewing and updating the goals and objectives of the

juvenile justice system, community leaders have been able to ensure that gaps in programming are identified and addressed. It also enabled leaders to recognize successful programs. Assessing what works and what does not is essential to continued success in the intervention and prevention of juvenile crime.



Lancaster County's Prioritized Needs

Lancaster County began identifying and updating its needs by examining grants recently submitted to the Nebraska Crime Commission from agencies throughout the county. Each of the agencies stated a problem that they thought was critical to the well being of youth in Lancaster County. Those problems were consolidated and brought to a one-time brainstorming session.

During the meeting, each of the individuals was asked to read through the list of problems facing

youth in this county, add to the list as they saw fit and edit or redefine the problems identified.

The community team was then divided into smaller groups, based on the problem that individuals selected as their highest priority. The smaller teams worked on further defining the terms, identifying factors that contribute to the problem and circumstances and solutions that could help alleviate the problem.

At the end of the brainstorming session, each person was asked to rank the priorities they saw as the three most urgent to youth in Lancaster County. From the original list of eight problems, five were clearly identified as priorities. (See Appendix D for a summary of the five problems as prioritized.)

Priority One

The term "prevention" is frequently used to describe an early intervention into a child's life to prevent *further* involvement in the criminal justice system. **Lancaster County would like to move to a "primary prevention" model.** Under such a model-- youth, especially youth with unsupervised, and unrestricted time and low self-esteem, are prevented from ever getting involved in activities that bring them into the criminal justice system.

If one could interview the elementary school teachers of each of the youth currently residing at the

Lancaster County Detention facility, many of those teachers would tell you that they saw the foundations of trouble long before the youth had contact with law enforcement. Although data supporting the link between early discipline problems and later criminal involvement is well documented nationwide, locally there is limited data available. Of the youth held at the Lancaster County Detention facility in 2000, 40% had been to the facility at least once before. Youth who are involved in the Expediter Program have an average of 7.5 law enforcement contacts for criminal behavior, prior to their participation in the Expediter Program.

If one includes any contact with law enforcement (status offenses, run-away, and as the victim of a crime) youth involved in the Expediter Program have had an average of 17 contacts with law enforcement agencies. The vast majority of these occur before the youth is involved in the Expediter Program. (This does not include traffic stops or traffic related incidents.) Clearly there are a number of opportunities to intervene in a child's life and prevent that child from ever entering the criminal justice system.

| Youth in the Expediter Program | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 |
|---|--------------------|------|------|
| Number of youth released from secure detention via Expediter Program* | Data not available | 177* | 166* |
| Average # of law enforcement | Data not | 17.9 | 16.4 |

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| contacts | available | | |
| Average Age of first documented law violation | Data not available | 12.5 years of age | 12.4 years of age |

*includes duplicates

The community team identified a number of factors that contribute to youth entering the criminal justice system, including the cycle of intergenerational criminal behavior, unsupervised time, drug and alcohol use, poverty, low-self esteem. In addition to the factors that contribute to delinquency, there are other reasons that we miss the opportunity to prevent youth from entering the system.

A contributing factor is the fact that while educators may clearly see youth who are headed for trouble, privacy laws protecting the youth and family often prevent the school from sharing concerns until the youth has broken the law.

The problem is clearly exacerbated by the fact that our systems are too busy dealing with the youth already involved in the system to notice youth who are merely on the fringes. It is truly a viscous cycle –we are too busy dealing with the problem to prevent the problem. The team working on this priority identified programs in Lancaster County that are working with youth to prevent, in the purest sense of the term, any commission of an unlawful act. Some of those programs include: Heartland Big Brother/ Big Sisters;

YWCA's Survival Skills, Respite (PASS); Lighthouse; Cedar's Juvenile Diversion Services, the Lincoln Council on Alcoholism and Drugs; Lincoln Action Program; Cedars Early Childhood Development as well as a number of programs like the School Community Intervention Program (SCIP) offered through the public school system.

The team identified the need for data linking risk factors and future criminal conduct as the most serious need in this area. One of the identified solutions included developing additional resources for younger children: including Head Start & Early Development programs. Another solution includes working through the confidentiality issues involved with schools to ensure better service and to better identify issues like truancy, that are often "red flags" and a pre-cursor to juvenile justice involvement. Clearly the primary goals under this priority are to reduce the number of youth entering the criminal justice system by intervening earlier with youth. Research indicates that the younger a child is when first involved in the juvenile justice system, the more likely the youth is to become a habitual offender. The other clear goal is to increase the age at which youth are entering the system. (See Appendix E for detailed baseline data and performance indicators.)

Priority Two

Lancaster County needs to strengthen intensive community-

based services that integrate treatment for youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

Lancaster County's juvenile system does not currently have the capacity to properly serve youth in need of treatment, especially youth with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders.

The Substance Abuse Task Force recently reported on a study of youth in both YRTC – Kearney and YRTC - Geneva. The report indicates that 76% of the young men at YRTC-Kearney had co-occurring chemical dependency and mental health issues. The same report found that young women treated at YRTC - Geneva had an even higher rate of co-occurring disorders, with 84% of the young women indicating co-morbidity. A recent study conducted of youth at intake into the Lancaster County Detention Center had similar findings. Of the 157 youth surveyed at intake, 70% scored in the caution or warning cut-off on at least one scale. A significant number of youth (64%) scored within the caution or warning range on two or more scales indicating the prevalence of co-occurring disorders among youth in the juvenile detention facility.



Factors that contribute to this problem include: long waiting lists for youth to get into treatment, insurance and managed care policies that hinder timely treatment, and the lack of coordination between agencies. Additional risk factors include the lack of Certified Alcohol Drug Abuse Counselors working with youth in the juvenile justice system and the lack of appropriate facilities. Other contributing factors include the fact that Lancaster County has not been able to access funding (via the State of Nebraska) to address substance abuse issues.

There are also some conditions that are helping Lancaster County address this problem. There is a growing awareness of the high rate of substance abuse and mental health issues among juveniles in the system. A number of studies have recently been conducted regarding co-occurring disorders in the juvenile justice population. The Substance Abuse Task Force and two studies conducted by the University of Nebraska have provided valuable data regarding the urgency of this problem.

The Lancaster County Drug Court Program has allowed a number of youth to receive the intensive treatment and supervision they so badly needed. Without Juvenile Drug Court it is likely that those youth would have simply melded into the juvenile justice system and eventually most of them would have had their probation revoked for continuing to use.

It is greatly anticipated that the new Youth Assessment Center will serve as a tremendous protective factor by helping to identify youth with treatment needs at an earlier point in the system. Another factor that is helping combat this problem is that major agencies like Families, First & Foremost are working diligently to provide comprehensive wrap-around services. Family involvement is stressed as critical to achieving success.

Probably the most serious gap identified was the lack of resources for pilot projects and the lack of quality program evaluation indicating the impact of the project.

The team identified a number of very useful solutions including working with existing resources and building on what Lancaster County already has in place. Pursuing federal funding sources that Nebraska has either not been eligible to receive, or has chosen not to pursue is instrumental to the success of this priority. Designing a universal screening tool to identify youth with serious mental health and substance abuse issues would greatly enhance our ability to identify youth early on in the system.

The group set a number of goals under this problem including an increase in the number of dual-diagnosis providers and a greater ability to access information from several different sources. The foremost goal is clearly identifying youth with mental health and substance abuse issues while the youth is still early on in the system.

(See the Appendix E for detailed performance indicators.)

Priority Three

Despite the fact that significantly fewer youth are detained in our detention facility than three years ago, **minority youth continue to be over-represented, and significantly so; not just in detention, but at every point of our juvenile justice system.**

In addition, there are subgroups within the minority population that are not as well served by our juvenile justice system as they could be: female youth, youth from new American families, bi-lingual youth, and youth who live in rural areas of Lancaster County.

| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
|--------------------------------|-------|------|------|
| Juvenile Detention Admission | *1009 | 1022 | 981 |
| Percent of minority admissions | 33% | 34% | 32% |
| Percent of female admissions | 22% | 28% | 23% |

*Includes returns from evaluations. After 1998, youth returning from evaluation were not counted as another admission.

Factors that contribute to the over-representation of certain groups include the lack of resources, like bi-lingual counselors, multi-cultural family advocacy, and programs for young women involved in the criminal justice system.

The circumstances of the family also strongly influence the youth's ability to access services that may keep a youth out of secure detention. For instance a youth who does not have a telephone could not be released on an electronic monitor. Finally, language barriers and the lack of interpreters may lead to a breakdown in communication at each point in the system. The language obstacle, whether it is at the point the youth is detained, or while a youth is appearing in court, can exacerbate and/or create a mistrust of the system.

Lancaster County has worked diligently to increase the services available to groups traditionally overlooked in the juvenile justice system. Families, First & Foremost has promoted wrap around services including culturally appropriate services. The Expediter Program, as well, seeks to arrange the services a youth needs. Lancaster County's educational system and the resources available to youth through the schools, in addition to excellent gender-specific programming have slowed an increase in the percent of female and minority youth in our detention facility.

There remain a few gaps with regard to services for subgroups within the juvenile system. One of the most outstanding gaps is the lack of culturally diverse staff and professionals, including counselors, probation officers, and family advocates. One of the factors that contributes to the lack of diverse professional staff is the fact that minorities represent a smaller percent of the adult population than

they do the juvenile population. The juvenile population consists of almost 15% minorities, while only 10% of the adult population are minority individuals.

Solutions to over-representation of certain sub-groups include making programs culturally competent. The team addressing this issue had some really creative ideas for attracting a more diverse applicant pool for challenging juvenile justice positions. Community resources, especially resources for families struggling financially, could greatly assist youth with problems like transportation and support.

The goal of addressing this problem is to identify factors contributing to minority over-representation, and to decrease the percent of minority youth and females involved in the juvenile justice system as deemed appropriate. Appendix E identifies specific points in the juvenile justice system, including pre and post adjudication, where minority youth are disproportionately represented (based upon the minority juvenile population.)

Priority Four

Lancaster County has made tremendous progress in creating alternatives to secure detention. **Evaluating the effectiveness and continuing the momentum of these programs is often more difficult than creating new programs.**

| | FY98-99 | FY99-00 | FY00-01 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of Alternatives to secure detention | 2 | 5 | 8 |
| Youth Released via the Expediter | 0 | 182 | 183 |
| | | | |

One of the problems of maintaining youth programs, especially grant-funded programs, is maintaining the funding and resources available. Other factors that make it difficult to continue the momentum of new programs includes finding qualified personnel, and making sure the programs are being utilized by the appropriate populations of youth.

The most challenging issue, however, is that youth sometimes exceed the boundaries of established programs and new programs are needed. The struggle then is whether to fund existing efforts, or to create new programs. With limited funds available, this can place established programs at risk financially.

Lancaster County's leadership has shown phenomenal support of the juvenile justice system's needs, both philosophically and financially. This, perhaps more than any other factor, has made the graduated sanctions/ community based alternative programs a success in Lancaster County. Only a few years ago, there was some resistance to allowing youth with law violations to avoid secure detention and be placed in community alternatives.

Many of the personnel hired to supervise alternative, community-based programs are able to think past the traditional ways of handling delinquent youth and encourage others to remain open to new ideas. Juvenile Judges are now placing some of the toughest kids in community-based programs like Juvenile Drug Court and wrap-around services. These programs are able to serve youth with extremely high needs.

Many of the sanctions available in Lancaster County are undergoing program evaluation, allowing decision-makers to determine the most effective programs and to be able to better allocate funds. Lancaster County's Juvenile Drug Court is currently being evaluated by Dr. Denise Hertz with the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

A few gaps remain in the continuum of care available to youth in Lancaster County. Despite tremendous alternatives, there remain long waiting lists for therapeutic group homes, limited number of classes for youth in need of anger management and an inadequate number of substance abuse programs for youth.

In a very recent study (2002) conducted by the University of Nebraska -Lincoln's Center for At-risk Children, both parents and service providers were surveyed about the barriers to services for youth in Lancaster County. Both parents and service providers reported that ability to pay and long waiting lists were the two biggest barriers to youth receiving services.

Occasionally youth are still sent out of county to receive services. Sometimes it is because the child simply cannot get the services needed, but other times it may be because the juvenile justice personnel are not willing to take a risk and allow the youth to remain in the community.

The goals Lancaster County set for its graduated sanctions / community-based programs include measuring the effectiveness of current programs and maintaining the programs that are effectively deterring youth from involvement in illegal activities. (See Appendix E for detailed goals and objectives.)

Thorough evaluation of all of the graduated sanction programs to determine cost-effectiveness and efficacy will require a movement toward using uniform definitions and terminology.

Priority Five

The current juvenile justice system does not have mechanisms in place to provide families support, while still holding the family accountable.

A large number of families are involved in the juvenile justice system each year. Some are families that have played a significant role in the dysfunction of their child(ren). Other parents have been vigilant in encouraging responsible behavior in their child(ren), despite the fact that the child(ren) failed to do so. The

juvenile justice system often fails to distinguish between these two groups. In so doing, the system fails to support the parents who are encouraging positive behavior in their children, and fails to discourage the parents who are promoting negative behaviors.

Perhaps the factor that really causes this problem is the fact that it is very difficult to ascertain which families are sabotaging their children's progress and which families may be very frustrated, but earnestly trying to help their child.

It is only with extended work with the family and multiple contacts that one can begin to discern the real workings of a family and the motivations of each member.

Factors like time, youth aging out of the system, and the lack of coordination between agencies, aggravate an already difficult task.

Integrating agency information systems should greatly enhance our ability to discern which families need support and which children need protection.

Solutions also included better coordination among agencies, family advocates and enhancing wrap around services. Continued support of the Assessment Center as it works with youth and families, will facilitate a liaison between the families and a juvenile justice system often foreign to families and sometimes contrary to the needs of the child.



Clearly the goal in addressing this problem is to better serve youth and their families. This goal has two clear objectives: providing decision-makers with better information and gathering the opinion of the family ~ whether or not the family feels supported through the juvenile justice system. This could be accomplished by surveying families that come through the Assessment Center or the Juvenile Court to determine if the juvenile justice system assisted them with their family situation (in their opinion) or made it worse.

Lancaster County's Budget

During the past few years, Lancaster County has dedicated a substantial amount of funds to meet the concerns of the youth in this county.

In the past fiscal year, the county spent \$6,834,771 on juvenile services. These services included all of the formal juvenile justice systems—like court, probation and detention.

Included in that number are all of the community-based programs as well, like the Juvenile Diversion Program, Tracker Services, Youth Violence Alternatives, Graduated Sanctions and female offender programs. Other funded programs include Expediter Services, Juvenile Drug Court, Truancy Programs, and restorative, juvenile accountability programs.

Almost 50% of those funds came from the county's general fund. Remaining funds were made available via state and federal funding.

Lancaster County spent roughly 61% of the \$6,834,771 on Juvenile Court (\$1,237,885), Juvenile Probation (\$155,952) and Juvenile Detention Center (\$2,757,366).

Community-based programs make up approximately 15% of the funds spent on Juvenile Services. The remaining 24% of funds spent were spent on Families, First & Foremost, (\$1,674,472) made available via federal funding.

In fiscal year 2001 Lancaster County spent roughly 5% of the county's overall budget on juvenile services. Approximately half of those funds were made available via federal and state grant programs. If one looks only at funds from the County's general fund and excludes federal and state funding that filters through the county, roughly 3% of the county's budget goes to juvenile services and programs, including Juvenile Court, probation, detention

and a number of community-based alternatives.

It is estimated that the solutions involved in this plan will cost approximately \$900,000 and increase the overall amount spent on youth in Lancaster County by less than half a percent. Funding for these proposed solutions may include some funds already in existence. These funds will not necessarily from new funding sources.

The cost of instituting new programs to deter younger children from ever entering the juvenile justice system is estimated at \$100,000.

Strengthening intensive community-based services that integrate treatment could total approximately \$250,000. Ignoring the need for integrated services, however, would be a much more costly venture.

Addressing the disproportionate number of minority and female youth involved in our juvenile justice system, will cost the county approximately \$75,000. The fact that this represents a smaller amount of estimated costs than any of the other priorities should not decrease the urgency of this problem. Fewer funds can be allocated to this issue only because a number of agencies and programs like the Expediter Program have already started to address the disproportionate number of minority youth and females in the system. Many existing programs are already seeking to address the issue and simply need to redouble their efforts.

Maintaining and building upon the graduated sanctions /community based alternatives already available to this community will cost the county an estimated \$400,000.

As Lancaster County has already experienced, alternatives to detention have a critical impact on other, more costly expenditures—like sending youth out of the county for services or housing youth in it's detention facility.



It is difficult to estimate the cost of holding families accountable while providing them the support they need to raise capable and responsible children. Identifying which families are in need of support will be an activity that falls largely on the shoulders of the new Youth Assessment Center. Potential costs may include the cost of substance abuse evaluations for parents of youth with 3(a) petitions pending, or referrals to existing service networks to strengthen family skills. An estimated cost for these programs is \$75,000.

Activities and Timetables

A comprehensive timeline has been developed for each of the goals set for the first year of this three-year strategic plan. The activities and timeline table (Appendix G) include a list of activities necessary to accomplish the goals set in this plan; applicable timelines for the first year; the individuals or agencies that will bear the responsibility of accomplishing the tasks and identifies some of the resources needed.

Evaluation

Clearly, program evaluation and data must form the basis for measuring the effectiveness of the solutions we put in place under this plan. (See Appendix F for long-term goals and objectives.)

Too often, excellent data is collected and then remains idle in a database and is never utilized. Part of the problem involves the use of multiple systems that are not integrated.

One of the goals of Lancaster County is to begin creating uniform definitions with regard to data collection and program evaluation. Coming up with uniform definitions for words like "recidivism" and developing uniform methods of reporting data will greatly improve the evaluation process.

In December 2001, Lancaster County purchased "Rite Track" software. This software is designed to provide effective data collection and set the stage for long-term measurement of program effectiveness. The possibilities for program and system evaluation through efficient use of this software are phenomenal.

"Rite Track" is a Windows-based program designed specifically for youth-serving facilities. The software includes support for several tasks including: interagency information sharing, client intake and assessment, treatment, planning, case management and data reporting.

Statistical reporting in "Rite Track" is highly advanced in function, yet it remains easy to implement. An example of this software's reporting function would be to find all of the individuals referred to the Expediter Program who are Caucasian males, under the age of 14 at intake, have attention-deficit disorder, but are not taking any type of medications.

Many agencies currently have their own management of information systems. The eventual goal is for all systems to be able to work in conjunction with or "communicate" with one another. Lancaster County is moving in the direction of a central hub of data collection.

With effective implementation and excellent data collection, the evaluation possibilities for Lancaster County have truly entered the new millennium.

Concluding Remarks

Over the past ten years, the juvenile justice community has actively sought progressively severe, prompt and fair consequences for juveniles who commit crimes in Lancaster County.

Despite tremendous progress we continue to be too busy working with youth already in the system –to notice youth on the fringes and prevent them from ever entering the juvenile justice system. These kids give us a number of indications that they are in trouble, from fighting in school to numerous “missing person” reports.

Early intervention, especially with regard to mental health and substance abuse issues, is vital to the success of our young people. The earlier that young people begin to use drugs, commit crimes and engage in violent behavior, the greater the likelihood is that they will have problems later on in life.

Maintaining our graduated sanctions and community based alternatives and measuring the effectiveness of existing programs will be instrumental in reducing the over-representation of minority youth throughout our juvenile system.

There is only one way that this community can accomplish the impressive goals set forth in this plan—to work closely, to rely on and really trust that many of the families we work with have the skills and the desire to see their child succeed.

Priority Three: Lancaster County will reduce the number of minority youth entering the juvenile justice system, at every level of the system. Minority youth continue to be over-represented, and significantly so, at every point of our juvenile justice system. In addition, there are subgroups within the minority population that are not as well served by our juvenile justice system as they could be: female youth, youth from new-American families, bi-lingual youth, youth who live in rural areas of Lancaster County. Lancaster County's goal is to assure that all youth are treated equitably, and that all youth are provided the opportunities and resources that will assist them in remaining out of secure detention.

Priority Four: Lancaster County will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the juvenile justice programs that exist. The goal is clearly to determine which interventions work the best and to continue to support programs that are effectively working with youth in Lancaster County.

Priority Five: Lancaster County will better distinguish between families who are supporting their children's healthy development and families who are promoting negative behaviors. The goal of this priority is to better determine which services a youth and family needs and to place the youth at the most appropriate level of care.

During the past few years, Lancaster County has dedicated a substantial amount of funds to meet the concerns of the youth in this county.

In the past fiscal year, the county spent \$6,834,771 on juvenile services. These services included all of the formal juvenile justice systems—like court, probation and detention. Included in that number are all of the community-based programs as well, like the Juvenile Diversion Program, Tracker Services, Youth Violence Alternatives, Graduated Sanctions and female offender programs. Other funded programs include Expediter Services, Juvenile Drug Court, Truancy Programs, and restorative, juvenile accountability programs.

In fiscal year 2001 Lancaster County spent roughly 5% of the county's overall budget on juvenile services. Approximately half of those funds were made available via federal and state grant programs. If one looks only at funds from the County's general fund and excludes federal and state funding that filters through the county, roughly 3% of the county's budget goes to juvenile services and programs, including Juvenile Court, probation, detention and a number of community-based alternatives.

It is estimated that the solutions involved in this plan will cost approximately \$900,000 and increase the overall amount spent on youth in Lancaster County by less than half a percent.

Over the past ten years, the Juvenile Justice Community has actively sought progressively severe, prompt and fair consequences for juveniles who commit crimes in Lancaster County. Early intervention, especially with regard to mental health and substance abuse issues, is vital to the success of our young people. Maintaining our graduated sanctions programs and measuring the effectiveness of existing programs will be essential to measuring success.

There is only one way that the juvenile justice system can accomplish the impressive goals set forth in this plan—and that is to work closely and trust that many of the families we work with have the skill and the desire to see their child succeed.

Appendices

- A. Community Team Members
- B. Lancaster County Village Clerks
- C. Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
- D. Summary of Prioritized Problems & Strategies
- E. Goals and Objectives (one year)
- F. Long-term Goals and Objectives (three year)
- G. Activities and Timeline

Comprehensive Juvenile Services Plan – Community Team

*Mr. David Beggs
Lincoln Police Department
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

*Ms. Beatty Brasch
Lincoln Action Program
210 "O" Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Ms. Julie Cervantes-Solomen
Heartland Big Brother Big Sisters
6201 Havelock Avenue
Lincoln Nebraska 68507

Ms. Renee Dozier
Families First & Foremost
315 South 9th Street, Suite 200
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Ms. Christy Ficke
YWCA
1432 "N" Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

*Ms. Lori Griggs
Lancaster County Office of Juvenile Probation
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Ms. Tracy Haynes
Health & Human Services
1050 "N" Street, Suite 250
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

*Ms. Anne Hobbs
555 South 10th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

*Mr. Dennis Keefe
Lancaster County Office of the Public Defender
555 South 10th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Ms. Maria Lavicky
Health & Human Services
1050 "N" Street, Suite 250
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

*Ms. Kit Boesch
Lancaster County
555 South 10th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Mr. Scott Carlson
Lancaster County Juvenile Drug Court
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

*The Honorable Thomas Dawson
Lancaster Juvenile Court
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 685082803

Ms. Nancy Dyars
Girl Scouts/ Homestead Council
1701 South 17th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68502

Ms. Linda Ganz
Centerpointe
1000 South 13th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Ms. Michelle Grummert
Child Guidance/ Detention Center
2220 South 10th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68502

Mr. Gus Hitz
Youth Assessment Center
315 South 9th Street, Suite 200
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Ms. Janet Johnson
Cedars Juvenile Diversion Services
770 North Cotner, Suite 410
Lincoln Nebraska 68505

Mr. Paul Ladehoff
The Mediation Center
1120 "K" Street, Suite 200
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Mr. Joe Lefler
Lancaster County Sheriff's Office
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Ms. Sandy Morrissey
Lincoln Council Drugs and Alcoholism
914 "L" Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

*The Honorable Linda Porter
Lancaster County Juvenile Court
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

*Mr. Corey Steel
Families First & Foremost
315 South 9th Street, Suite 200
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Ms. Judy Stone
Nebraska Legal Services
825 Terminal Building
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Dr. Vicky Weisz
Center For Children Family & The Law
121 South 13th, Suite 302
Lincoln Nebraska 685880227

*Mr. T.J. McDowell
Lighthouse
2530 "N" Street

Ms. Susan Wood
Cedars Juvenile Diversion Services
770 North Cotner, Suite 410
Lincoln Nebraska 68505

*Ms. Merry Wills
Cedars Youth Services
620 North 48th St., Suite 100
Lincoln, NE 68504

*Mr. Jim Blue
Cedars Youth Services
620 North 48th St., Suite 100
Lincoln, NE 68504

*Dr. Kathryn Olson
Center For Children Family & The Law
121 South 13th, Suite 302
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Ms. Connie Oubre
Cedars Juvenile Diversion Services
6601 Pioneers Blvd
Lincoln Nebraska 68506

*Ms. Deb Sprague
Lincoln Council Drugs and Alcoholism
914 "L" Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Ms. Deb VanDyke Reis
CASA for Lancaster County
215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 417
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Ms. Jennifer Stuhmer
MAD DADS
125 South 52nd
Lincoln Nebraska 68510

*Ms. Becky Wild
Lincoln Public Schools
5901 "O" Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68510

Ms. Sandra Miller
Cedars Youth Services Youth Services
620 North 48th, Suite 100

*Ms. Delia Steiner
Lincoln Public Schools
5901 'O' Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

*Ms. Kate Speck
Lincoln Med. Ed. Foundation
4600 Valley Road
Lincoln, NE 68510

*Ms. Kathy Stokes
Lincoln Action Program
210 'O' Street
Lincoln, NE 68502

*Ms. Jolleen Clymer
216 North 11th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

*Mayor Don Wesely
City of Lincoln
555 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

*Ms. Tina Loseke
Lincoln City Attorney's Office
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

*Mr. Dennis Banks
Lancaster County Detention Center
2220 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68502

*Mr. Bernie Heier
Lancaster County Board
555 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

*Kathy Campbell
Lancaster County Board
555 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

*The Honorable Toni Thorson
Lancaster Juvenile Court
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

*Mr. Steve Rowoldt
Adult Probation
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

*Mr. Gary Lacey
Lancaster County Attorney
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

*Mr. Terry Wagner
Lancaster County Sheriff
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

*Mr. Gonzo Kasperek
YMCA of Lincoln
216 North 11th Street

*Ms. Petra Smith
Cedars Youth Services
620 North 48th St., Suite 100
Lincoln, NE 68504

*Mr. Mike Thurber
Department of Corrections
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

*Mr. Dana Roper
Lincoln City Attorney
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

*Ms. Betsy Kosier
The Mediation Center
1120 'K' Street, Suite 200
Lincoln, NE 68508

*Ms. Sandra Delano, Program Dir.
Lincoln Regional Center
W. Prospector & Folsom
Lincoln, NE 68502

*Ms. Karen Hardt
Adolescent Family Services
W. Prospector & Folsom
Lincoln, NE 68502

*Ms. Michelle Miklos
CenterPointe, Inc.
1000 South 13th Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

*Mr. Topher Hansen
CenterPointe, Inc.
1000 South 13th Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

*Ms. Susan Scott
YWCA of Lincoln
1432 'N' Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

*Ms. Kay Bursheim
Indian Center, Inc.
1100 Military Road
Lincoln, NE 68508

*Ms. Francis Reinehr
1735 South 16th St., #B
Lincoln, NE 68502

Lincoln, NE 68508

*Ms. Sheryl Schrepf
Families First & Foremost
315 South 9th Street, Suite 200
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

*Ms. Carol Crumpacker
Child Guidance
215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 417
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

* Members of the Juvenile Justice Review Committee

Lancaster County Village Clerks

BENNET

Patricia Rule
P. O. Box 255
Bennet, NE 68317

DAVEY

Lori Streeter
P. O. Box 7
Davey, NE 68336

DENTON

Charlotte Tebrink
P. O. Box 132
Denton, NE 68339

EMERALD

Eugene Melichar
8321 W. "O" Street
Lincoln, NE 68528

FIRTH

Mike Hoefler
P. O. Box 38
Firth, NE 68358

HALLAM

June Winkler
250 S. East
Hallam, NE 68368

HICKMAN

Nancy Votta
P. O. Box 127
Hickman, NE 68372

MALCOLM

Rex Guerin
310 Hudkins Road
Malcolm, NE 68402

PANAMA

Gayle French
P. O. Box 117
Panama, NE 68419

RAYMOND

Nancy Niemann
3100 Trudy Ann Drive
Raymond, NE 68428

ROCA

Mike Oelschlager
P. O. Box 103
Roca, NE 68430

SPRAGUE

Roger Palmer
P. O. Box 47
Sprague, NE 68438

WAVERLY

Doug Rix
P. O. Box 427
Waverly, NE 68462

**Lancaster County
Comprehensive Juvenile Services Plan
Steering Committee**

Ms. Susan Wood
Cedars Juvenile Diversion Services
770 North Cotner, Suite 410
Lincoln Nebraska 68505

Ms. Michelle Shindler
Detention Center for Youth
2220 South 10th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68502

The Honorable Linda Porter
Lancaster County Juvenile Court
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Ms. Lori Griggs
Lancaster County Ofc of Juvenile Probation
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Mr. Jeff Gade
Lincoln Police Department
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Ms. Dawn Swanson
HHSS- Office of Juvenile Services
1050 N Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

Mr. Gus Hitz
Youth Assessment Center
1200 Radcliff Street
Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Summary of Lancaster's County's Prioritized Needs

Priority One: For Lancaster County to move to a “primary prevention” model. The term “prevention” is frequently used to describe an early intervention into a child's life to prevent *further* involvement in the juvenile justice system. Under a primary prevention model-- youth, especially youth with unsupervised time and low self-esteem, are prevented from ever getting involved in activities that bring them into the criminal justice system.

Priority Two: For Lancaster County to strengthen intensive community-based services that integrate treatment for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Lancaster County's current juvenile system does not have the capacity to properly serve youth in need of treatment, especially youth with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders.

Priority Three: For Lancaster County to reduce the number of minority youth and females involved in the juvenile justice system. Despite the fact that significantly fewer youth fewer youth are detained in our detention facility than three years ago, minority youth continue to be over-represented, and significantly so, at every point of our juvenile justice system.

Priority Four: For Lancaster County to continue to evaluate the effectiveness of its alternative graduated sanctions programs. Said evaluation should include not only a cost-effectiveness measure, but should measure the effectiveness of the program—including recidivism rates, increased skill, increased employment rates.

Priority Five: For Lancaster County to distinguish between parents who encourage positive behaviors in their children and parents who promote the negative behaviors of their children, and to support families who fall into the first group. The juvenile justices system often fails to distinguish between these two groups. In so doing, the system fails to support the parents who are encouraging positive behavior in their children, and fails to discourage the parents who promoting negative behaviors.

Specific Strategies and Action Planning Steps

Although a number of strategies have been identified as solutions under the narrative section of this plan, specific strategies will emerge after current programs have been evaluated and with additional input from the community.

Strategic Planning Teams (SPT's) will be formed from the original Community Team (During the first brain-storming session individuals were asked if they would be interested in continuing to work on the identified problem throughout the year.) In addition, when the plan was introduced to the community for feedback, community members were asked if they would be interested in serving on a Strategic Planning Team.

Task force teams will begin meeting in June 2002 to begin developing specific strategies for each prioritized and stated problem. Clearly there are programs and agencies currently addressing some of the problems identified by this plan. Listed below are some identified

strategies that currently exist, but is by no means a comprehensive or exhaustive list. New strategies will be developed to address gaps in the existing continuum of services.

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Priority One: | For Lancaster County to move to a "primary prevention" model. |
| Specific Strategies : | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To promote the YWCA's Survival Skills Program, as a proven strategy to success. 2. To promote the Big Brothers/ Big Sisters Program, as a model prevention program. 3. To maximize use of the Youth Assessment Center for early identification or at-risk behaviors. 4. To solidify wrap-around services through Families, First & Foremost as part of a primary prevention model. |
| Priority Two: | For Lancaster County to strengthen intensive community-based services that integrate treatment for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. |
| Specific Strategies : | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To clearly identify youth with mental health, substance abuse and co-occurring disorders through the Assessment Center. 2. To have youth receive a coordinated service plan before leaving the Youth Assessment Center. 3. For crisis response efforts to reduce the number of youth entering the detention facility, especially youth with mental health issues. 4. To promote F3 Care Coordination for youth with serious emotional disorders. 5. To work with local treatment providers and managed care/ insurance providers to increase availability of treatment for youth. |
| Priority Three: | For Lancaster County to reduce the number of minority youth and females involved in the juvenile justice system. |
| Specific Strategies : | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To promote programs like Cedar's Minority Outreach Diversion that are seeking to determine why certain populations are over represented at various points in the system. 2. To further promote community-based alternatives that help reduce minority overrepresentation, including: Centerpointe's Evening Reporting, B.E.S.T., Cedars' trackers and Day Reporting, and wrap-around services (through F3 and Cedars). 3. To expand the Court-ordered Employment Program from 7 to 15 slots for youth ages 16-18 years old. 4. To promote quality gender-specific programs like the "Try Another Way" project, Cedar's Early Female Intervention, and the YWCA's Survival Skills. |
| Priority Four: | For Lancaster County to continue to evaluate the effectiveness of its alternative graduated sanctions programs. |
| Specific Strategies : | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To promote uniform terminology across all programs. 2. To encourage F3's integration into the county's new Management of Information System. 3. To encourage all juvenile justice and community-based youth programs to integrate their information systems and promote information sharing across programs like: Evening Reporting, B.E.S.T., Cedars' trackers and Day Reporting, and Court-Ordered and wrap-around (through F3 and Cedars), Cedars' Juvenile Diversion. |

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| | 4. To further facilitate the collaboration between Youth Assessment, Juvenile Detention and Staff Secure. |
| Priority Five: | For Lancaster County to distinguish between parents who encourage positive behaviors in their children and parents who promote the negative behaviors of their children, and to support families who fall into the first group. |
| Specific Strategies : | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To encourage F3's Healthy Family Program to continue to facilitate family involvement and input in the juvenile justice system. 2. To gather information from families –through survey--about their experiences in the juvenile justice system. 3. To encourage studies conducted through the University regarding obstacles to families receiving services, and to promote further examination of the family's perspective. 4. To encourage information sharing across programs, especially information gained through the Youth Assessment Center to be shared with the Juvenile Court. 5. To encourage wrap-around services and family advocates through Families, First & Foremost encouraging active family involvement and input in determining what's best for their child. |

Priority One

The term "prevention" is frequently used to describe an early intervention into a child's life to prevent *further* involvement in the criminal justice system. Lancaster County would like to move to a "primary prevention" model. Under such a model-- youth, especially youth with unsupervised time and low self-esteem, are prevented from ever getting involved in activities that bring them into the criminal justice system.

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Goal: To prevent youth, especially youth with unsupervised, unrestricted time and low self-esteem, from entering the criminal justice system and to reduce the age at which youth have their first contact with the law, by increasing community-based opportunities. | | |
| Objective 1: To decrease the number of youth entering the criminal justice system by 10% over the next 12 months. | | |
| Performance Indicators | Baseline Statistics (Jan. 1, 2001- Dec. 31, 2001) | Projected results |
| Number of youth referred to LPD's Family Crime Division | 201 youth | 181 youth |
| Number of youth referred to juvenile diversion | 1070 youth | 963 youth |
| Number of petitions filed in Juvenile Court (misdemeanor & felony cases) | 1,342 petitions filed (includes supplemental petitions filed | 1,208 petitions (including supplemental petitions filed |
| Number of youth on probation | 915 youth | 824 youth |
| Number of youth in Lancaster County Detention Center | 764 youth 578 youth (excludes youth from other counties) * | 764 youth*** 520 youth (excludes youth from other counties) * |
| Objective 2: To increase the average age at which youth are getting involved in the criminal justice system at each point in the system. | | |
| Performance Indicators | Baseline Statistics (Jan. 1, 2001- Dec. 31, 2001) | Projected Results |
| Average age of youth entering LPD's Family Crime Division | 9 years old (estimated age --FC only serve youth 7-11) | 10 years old |
| Average age of youth enrolled in Juvenile Diversion | 15.5 years of age | 16 years old |
| Average age of youth on whom petitions were filed in Juvenile Court (misdemeanor & felony cases) | Data Not Available | 15.5 years old |
| Average age of youth on probation | 15.8 years old** | 16.5 years old |
| Average age of youth in Lancaster County Detention Center | 16.6 years old * | 17 years old |
| * Does not include youth in Lancaster County Detention who are there on parole, safekeeping, or under contract from another county. | | |
| **Youth under the age of 14 were treated as 14. Youth over 17 were treated as 18 years old. | | |

Priority Two

Lancaster County needs to strengthen intensive community-based services that integrate treatment for youth involved in the criminal justice system. The current juvenile system does not currently have the capacity to properly serve youth in need of treatment, especially youth with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders.

| Goal: To better identify youth in the juvenile justice system with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders. | | |
|--|---|---|
| Objective 1: To increase the number of youth adequately assessed (for substance abuse and mental health concerns) as they enter the criminal justice system from 0 to 250 over the next 12 months. | | |
| Performance Indicators | Baseline Statistics (Jan. 1, 2001- Dec. 31, 2001) | Projected results |
| Number of youth in the Lancaster County juvenile justice system with features of substance abuse. | Data Not Available* | It is estimated that 65% of the youth that complete assessment through the Youth Assessment Center, or another community-based assessment, will exhibit features of substance abuse. |
| Number of youth in the Lancaster County juvenile justice system presenting with an indication of a mental health concern. | A study involving 157 youth, assessed with the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI-2) was conducted at the detention facility. At least 70% of the youths identified symptoms of a mental health disorder at intake into the Juvenile Detention Center. | It is estimated that 65% of the youth that complete assessment through the Youth Assessment Center, or another community-based assessment, will present with indications of mental health issues. |
| Number of youth in the Lancaster County juvenile justice system presenting with both an indication of a mental health concern and features of substance abuse. | A study involving 157 youth, assessed with the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI-2) was conducted at the detention facility: 64% of the youth reported co-morbid symptoms of mental health disorder by scoring in the caution or warning range on two or more MAYSI-2 scales. | It is estimated that 65% of the youth that complete assessment through the Youth Assessment Center, or another community-based assessment, will present with issues of co-morbidity. |
| * Some of the youth who scored in the caution or warning range on two or more scales will have scored in the substance abuse section. | | |
| | | |

Priority Two

Lancaster County needs to strengthen intensive community-based services that integrate treatment for youth involved in the criminal justice system. The current juvenile system does not currently have the capacity to properly serve youth in need of treatment, especially youth with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders.

| Goal: To better serve youth in the juvenile justice system with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders. | | |
|--|--|--|
| Objective 2: To increase the number of treatment opportunities (inpatient and outpatient) beds/slots by 20% over the next 12 months. | | |
| Performance Indicators | Baseline Statistics (Jan. 1, 2001- Dec. 31, 2001) | Projected results |
| Number of agencies able to work with youth with co-occurring (substance abuse and mental health) dysfunction. | 3 agencies | 3 agencies*** |
| Number of residential placements available for youth in need of substance abuse services. | 24 placements* | 30 actual placements/beds available |
| Number of daytime/ partial care services available for youth in need of substance abuse services. | 12 (maximum)) | 20 actual placements/slots available |
| Number of intensive outpatient services for youth in need of substance abuse services. | Intensive Outpatient –8 (maximum) | 10 intensive outpatient placements/ slots available |
| Number of counseling services for youth in need of substance abuse services. | Outpatient Counseling –unrestricted** | Outpatient Counseling –unrestricted a waiting list of less than 5 business days. |
| * Agencies generally have a maximum of 12 youth in their residential placements, however, one agency has a maximum of 12 spaces (including it's daytime partial care.) As the result, there is almost never an actual total of 24 slots. | | |
| ** Two agencies responded that they do not have a designated number of slots for substance abuse counseling and that they generally do not have a waiting list. | | |
| *** An increase in the number of agencies has not been a projected result—but additional services may require additional agencies. | | |

Priority Two

Lancaster County needs to strengthen intensive community-based services that integrate treatment for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. The current system does not currently have the capacity to properly serve youth in need of treatment, especially youth with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders.

| Goal: To better identify and serve youth in the juvenile justice system with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders. | | |
|--|--|---|
| Objective 2: To increase the number of treatment opportunities (inpatient and outpatient) beds/slots by 20% over the next 12 months. | | |
| Performance Indicators | Baseline Statistics (Jan. 1, 2001- Dec. 31, 2001) | Projected results |
| Number of residential placements available for youth in need of mental health services. | 32 beds (youth age 12-18) 18 beds (children ages 3-11) | 39 beds (youth age 12-18) 22 beds (children ages 3-11) |
| Number of day treatment / partial care services available for youth in need of mental health services. | 20 youth (youth age 12-18) 20 youth (children ages 3-11) | 24 placements (youth ages 12-18) 24 placements (youth ages 3-11) |
| Number of intensive outpatient services for youth in need of mental health services. | Intensive Outpatient –unrestricted* | Intensive Outpatient –unrestricted & a waiting list of less than 5 business days. |
| Number of counseling services for youth in need of mental health services. | Outpatient Counseling –unrestricted* | Outpatient Counseling –unrestricted & no waiting list |
| Number of residential placements available for youth with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health issues. | 12 placements/beds | 15 placements/beds |
| * Agencies responded that they do not have a designated number of slots for outpatient counseling and funding limitations are the only reason they would have a waiting list. (If the youth's insurance only permits him to see a specific therapist.) | | |

Priority Three

Despite the fact that significantly fewer youth are detained in our detention facility than three years ago, minority youth continue to be over-represented, and significantly so, at every point of our juvenile justice system. The population of female offenders has also increased.

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Goal: To decrease the percent of minority youth and females involved in the juvenile justice system at every point in the system. | | |
| Objective 1: To decrease the number of minority youth entering the juvenile justice system by 10% over the next 12 months. | | |
| Performance Indicators | Baseline Statistics (Jan. 1, 2001- Dec. 31, 2001) | Projected results |
| Number of youth referred to LPD's Family Crime Division | 201 youth | 181 youth |
| Percent of minority youth referred to family Crimes Division | Data not Available | 20% or 36 youth |
| Number of youth referred to juvenile diversion /percent minority youth | 1070 youth | 963 youth |
| Percent of minority youth referred to Juvenile Diversion | 200 youth / 19% | 144 youth/ 15% (reflective of population) |
| Number of petitions filed in Juvenile Court (misdemeanor & felony cases) | 1,342 petitions filed (includes supplemental petitions filed) | 1,208 petitions (including supplemental petitions filed) |
| Percent of minority youth on whom juvenile petitions were filed | Data Not Collected | |
| Number of youth on Probation | 915 youth | 824 youth |
| Percent of minority youth on Juvenile Probation | 187 youth / 21% of youth on probation | 140 youth/ 17% of youth on probation |
| Number of youth in Lancaster County Detention Center | 578 youth (excludes youth from other counties) * | 520 youth* |
| Percent of minority youth in the Juvenile Detention Center | 179 youth (31% of youth in detention) | 109 youth (21% of youth in detention) |
| * Does not include youth in Lancaster County Detention who are there on parole, safekeeping, or under contract from another county. | | |

Priority Three

Despite the fact that significantly fewer youth are detained in our detention facility than three years ago, minority youth continue to be over-represented, and significantly so, at every point of our juvenile justice system. The population of female offenders has also increased.

| Goal: To decrease the percent of female youth and females involved in the juvenile justice system at every point in the system. | | |
|---|--|---|
| Objective 1: To decrease the number of females entering the juvenile justice system by 5% over the next 12 months. | | |
| Performance Indicators | Baseline Statistics (Jan. 1, 2001- Dec. 31, 2001) | Projected results |
| Number of youth that complete an intake through LPD's Family Crime Division | 201 youth | 181 youth |
| Percent of female youth that complete an intake through LPD's Family Crimes Division | Data not Available | Collect baseline data |
| Number of youth referred to juvenile diversion /percent female youth | 1070 youth | 963 youth |
| Percent of female youth referred to Juvenile Diversion | 377 females / 35% | 298 females / 31% |
| Number of petitions filed in Juvenile Court (misdemeanor & felony cases) | 1,342 petitions filed (includes supplemental petitions filed | 1,208 petitions (including supplemental petitions filed |
| Percent of female youth on whom juvenile petitions were filed | Data Not Collected | Collect baseline data |
| Number of youth on Probation | 915 youth | 824 youth |
| Percent of female youth on Juvenile Probation | 271 females / 30% of the youth on juvenile probation | 210 females/ 25% of the youth on juvenile probation |
| Number of youth in Lancaster County Detention Center | 764 youth 578 youth* | 764 youth 520 youth * |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Percent of female youth in the Juvenile Detention Center | 172 females (23% of youth in the detention center) 128 females (22% of youth from Lancaster County held at the detention center.) | 137 females (18% of youth in the detention center) 99 females (19% of youth from Lancaster County held at the detention center.) |
| * Does not include youth in Lancaster County Detention who are there on parole, safekeeping, or under contract from another county. | | |

Appendix E

Priority Four

Lancaster County has made tremendous progress in creating alternatives to secure detention. Evaluating the effectiveness and continuing the momentum of these programs is often more difficult than creating new programs.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Goal: To conduct thorough evaluation of all of the graduated sanction programs to determine effectiveness of the sanctions. | | |
| Objective 1: To increase the number of agencies using uniform definitions and terms of measurement from 0 to 10 over the next 12 months. | | |
| Performance Indicators | Baseline Statistics (Jan. 1, 2001- Dec. 31, 2001) | Projected results |
| Number of agencies that offer a Graduated Sanction Program. | 10 agencies / programs | 12 agencies/ programs |
| Number of meetings/ discussions on common definitions and standards for reporting program success. | No baseline data | 3 meetings |
| Number of definitions/ measurements of success that agencies use in common. | No baseline data | 25 terms of measurement will be set out in a program evaluation handbook to be used in Lancaster county. |
| Objective 2: To increase the number of agencies that have been formally evaluated, by an objective and non-affiliated evaluator from 0 to 5 within the next 12-month. | | |
| Number of Graduated Sanctions being evaluated by an independent source | 0 programs | 5 programs |

Priority Five

The current juvenile justice system does not have mechanisms in place to provide families support, while still holding the family accountable.

| Goal: To better identify and serve families involved in the juvenile justice system, by gaining a better understanding of family's needs and thereby better and more appropriately serve the youth that reside within the family. | | |
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| Objective 1: To increase the number of families clearly identified and assessed (to determine the families strengths and needs) as their child enters the criminal justice system from 0 to 250 over the next 12 months. | | |
| Performance Indicators | Baseline Statistics (Jan. 1, 2001- Dec. 31, 2001) | Projected results |
| Number of families with a child(ren) involved in the Lancaster County juvenile justice system identified as being in need of support systems. | Data Not Available | 60% of the youth that complete assessment through the Youth Assessment Center. |
| Number of families with a child(ren) involved in the Lancaster County juvenile justice system that are not identified as being in need of any additional services. | Data Not Available | 40% of the youth that complete assessment through the Youth Assessment Center. |
| Number of agencies working collaboratively through the Youth Assessment Center to better serve youth and families involved in the criminal justice system. | Data Not Available | 15 Agencies |
| Percent of families surveyed that indicated receiving the services they needed. | Data Not Available | 65% of families that the youth that completed a survey through a criminal justice agency will indicate that they received the services they or their child needed. |
| Percent of families surveyed that indicated feeling supported by the juvenile justice, in raising their child to be law-abiding citizen. | Data Not Available | 65% of families that the youth that completed a survey through a criminal justice agency, will indicate that they felt supported by the juvenile justice system. |

Long-range Goals and Objectives (Three year)

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| Goal 1: To prevent youth, especially youth with unsupervised time and low self-esteem, from entering the criminal justice system and to reduce the age at which youth have their first contact with the law. |
| Objective 1: To decrease the number of youth involved in the juvenile justice system. The percent of decrease will be determined for each level of the system after examining the first year of data. |
| Objective 2: To increase the average age at which youth are getting involved in the criminal justice system at each point in the system over the next three years. |
| Goal 2: To better identify and serve youth in the juvenile justice system with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders. |
| Objective 1: To increase the number of treatment opportunities (residential and community-based) beds/slots by 20% over the next three years. |
| Objective 2: To increase the number of youth adequately assessed (for substance abuse and mental health concerns) as they enter the criminal justice system from 0 to 750 over the next three years. |
| Goal 3: To decrease the percent of minority youth and females involved in the juvenile justice system at every point in the system. |
| Objective 1: To decrease the number of minority youth entering the juvenile justice system by 20% over the next three years. |
| Goal 4: To conduct thorough evaluation of all of the graduated sanction programs to determine effectiveness of the sanctions. |
| Objective 1: To increase the number of agencies using uniform definitions and terms of measurement from 0 to 20 over the next three years. |
| Objective 2: To increase the number of agencies that have been formally evaluated, by an objective and non-affiliated evaluator from 0 to 8 within the next three years. |
| Goal 5: To better identify and serve families involved in the juvenile justice system, by gaining a better understanding of family's needs and thereby better and more appropriately serve the youth that reside within the family. |
| Objective 1: To increase the number of families clearly identified and assessed (to determine the families strengths and needs) as their child enters the criminal justice system from 0 to 750 over the next three years. |
| Objective 2: To maintain out-of-county boarding contracts at less than 10 youth placed at facilities outside Lancaster County over the next three years. |

Comprehensive Activities and Timeline

| Action | Who | When? | Resources Needed |
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| Meet with Juvenile Court to determine feasibility of beginning to collect data (age, race, ethnicity) of all petitions filed in Juvenile Court. | Juvenile Justice Coordinator Juvenile Court Personnel | First Quarter | Juvenile Court personnel to gather and track data from petitions. |
| Meet with LPD, Juvenile Diversion, Juvenile Probation, Assessment Center & Detention facility to discuss goal of reducing youth referred and increase age of youth referred. Discuss data collection –as related to this goal and development of uniform terminology for program evaluation. | Juvenile Justice Coordinator Juvenile Diversion Coordinator Assessment Center Director Juvenile Probation/ Detention Center Personnel Graduated Sanctions Programs Expediter programs University of Nebraska -Lincoln | First Quarter | Meeting Space and Time Funds for programming |
| Work with the Assessment Center to determine the number of youth entering the system in need of substance abuse services. | Juvenile Justice Coordinator Assessment Center Clinical Director | First Quarter | Data from the Rite Track MIS |
| Work with the Assessment Center to determine the number of youth entering the system in need of mental health services. | Juvenile Justice Coordinator Assessment Center Clinical Director | First Quarter | Data from the Rite Track MIS |
| Conduct a study to determine the number of residential treatment, intensive community based-options for youth with mental health issues -- available at any given time. | Juvenile Justice Coordinator | Second Quarter | Data from Rite Track Data collected from providers |
| Conduct a study to determine the number of residential treatment, intensive community based-options for youth with substance abuse features -- available at any given time. | Juvenile Justice Coordinator SATF Treatment Team | Second Quarter | Data from Rite Track Data collected from providers |
| Meet with LPD, Juvenile Diversion, Juvenile Probation, Assessment Center & Detention facility to discuss whether any progress has been made on each of the goals. Data Collection review. | Juvenile Justice Coordinator Juvenile Diversion Coordinator Assessment Center Director Juvenile Probation/ Expediter Detention Center Personnel Graduated Sanctions Programs | Second Quarter | Meeting Space and Time |

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| Meeting of Treatment Providers and Juvenile Justice personnel to compare the need vs. the availability of treatment options available to youth in Lancaster County. | Substance Abuse TX Providers Mental Health TX Providers Wrap around Service Providers Assessment Center Director | Third Quarter | Data collected from study (number of slots available on random days, length of waiting list, etc) |
| Discussion of Insurance Issues with Treatment Providers and juvenile justice Personnel. | Substance Abuse TX Providers Mental Health TX Providers Wrap around service providers Assessment Center Director | Third Quarter | Providers input on how insurance issues affect the ability for youth to receive timely services in Lancaster County. |
| Present data and information collected from combined meeting to the Juvenile Justice Review Committee and decide further course of action. (Additional beds needed, pursuing funding opportunities through the state, legislative changes.) | Juvenile Justice Coordinator Juvenile Justice Review Committee Human Services Coordinator C-SIP Representation SATF Treatment Team | Third Quarter | Meeting Space and Time |
| Development of handbook of uniform terminology for program evaluation and reporting in Lancaster County. | Juvenile Justice Coordinator Grants Administrator Agencies receiving funds through Lancaster County | Third Quarter | Data Collection best practices model to follow. |
| Meet with juvenile justice agencies/ training on reporting, completing grants forms and using uniform terminology. | Juvenile Justice Coordinator Grants Administrator Agencies receiving funds through Lancaster County | Fourth Quarter | Meeting Space and Time |
| Evaluation of Graduated Sanctions Programs (four Expediter programs utilized 1999-2001) | Juvenile Expediter Juvenile Justice Coordinator | First Quarter | Juvenile Expediter Data, access to records and CJIS, Juvenile Probation records for youth involved in the Expediter Program. |
| Evaluation of Lancaster County's utilization of out-of-county boarding contracts. | Juvenile Justice Coordinator | Second Quarter | Juvenile Court data, access to Juvenile Probation records for youth placed out of county. |
| Administer on-going survey of youth coming through the juvenile justice system to determine whether the family feels they are receiving the services they need and whether they feel | Juvenile Justice Coordinator Juvenile Diversion Coordinator Assessment Center Director Juvenile Probation/ Detention Center Personnel | First-Fourth Quarters | Survey and collections sites |

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| supported by the juvenile justice system. | Graduated Sanctions Programs Expediter programs Juvenile Drug Court Program | | |
| Summarize accomplishments achieved during the first year and distribute results to all agencies, groups, stakeholders and parties involved. Update Comprehensive Juvenile Services Plan. | Juvenile Justice Coordinator | Fourth Quarter | |
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